

## Alternate books, courses if material is "offensive"

Censorship will be the key issue Halton Board of Education trustees will have to come to grips with at the Board's next regular meeting.

Superintendent of Program John Boich has filed with the board a six page report dealing with textbooks and the censorship question.

Mr. Boich's report deals with a situation that occurred in Kanawha County, West Virginia. Controversies in that county over books being used in the school system eventually led to a board being intimidated, a superintendent being driven out, teachers becoming frustrated, angry and fearful and students being depressed, he said.

According to Mr. Boich's report the board there passed a resolution that stated no student would be required to use a book that is objectionable either on religious or moral grounds.

The resolution also stated no teacher is authorized to indoctrinate a student to follow either moral values or religious beliefs which are objectionable to either the student or the student's parents.

According to the report that action did not appease the protesting parents. Eventually anti-book rallies and marches were organized, school buses were hit by gunshot blasts, one parent's car was fire bombed and other disturbing actions took place.

Eventually the board moved from a position of conciliation to one of capitulation and stringent guidelines for textbook selection were developed.

"It is reasonable to state that under these guidelines there is no textbook in any area of literature to which some individuals and groups might not take offence. What is being promoted as a "neutral" education that is non-controversial, according to the values and traditions of

individuals or groups. These Board guidelines could and would destroy education for there is no literature that is value-free. Literature contains ideas, and ideas concern values," Mr. Boich said.

The Kanawha Board set up a procedure that would have a parents' committee screen books. A 75 per cent majority is required to allow any book to be used.

"This procedure has all the aspects of an administrative nightmare and gives significant opportunities for censorship. The real issue, however, is that the Board has abdicated its legal obligation to maintain responsible control of the schools and has made censors of the parents. What ultimately is endangered is the atmosphere of free inquiry and the free exchange of ideas without which education cannot survive," Mr. Boich said.

Boich has asked the board to pass a resolution that would allow any student to take an alternate course if material is considered offensive. On the same hand the resolution states that the controversial material should not be banned.

The onus under Boich's guidelines falls to the teacher and principal in the school. His report also asks six questions of trustees, dealing with the rights of parents and the obligations of the school professionals.

"What are the rights of parental and community involvement in the selection of public school curricular and supplementary materials?"

"What are the obligations of public school professionals and boards of education to provide for such involvement and, at the same time, maintain responsible control of the schools?"

"Where is the line drawn between legitimate public concern for and criticism of

public school curricula and criticism that is illegitimate and educationally destructive?"

"Shall the purpose of education be confined to the transmission of basic skills and of a preconceived system of facts, carefully screened to ensure against cultural shock or against any intellectual awakening that might cause students to question the precepts and traditions of their nurture?"

"Shall the content of public education be determined by the parents of each community to ensure against violation of prevailing community and parental values? And if so, which parents and whose values shall prevail?"

"Shall the entire matter of educational programs and materials be submitted to a popular vote in order to determine the prevailing value system? What then shall be the rights of those whose values lost out at the polling place? What then would be the need for an elected board of education or for the professional knowledge of educators? What then would be left of the right of students to learn?"

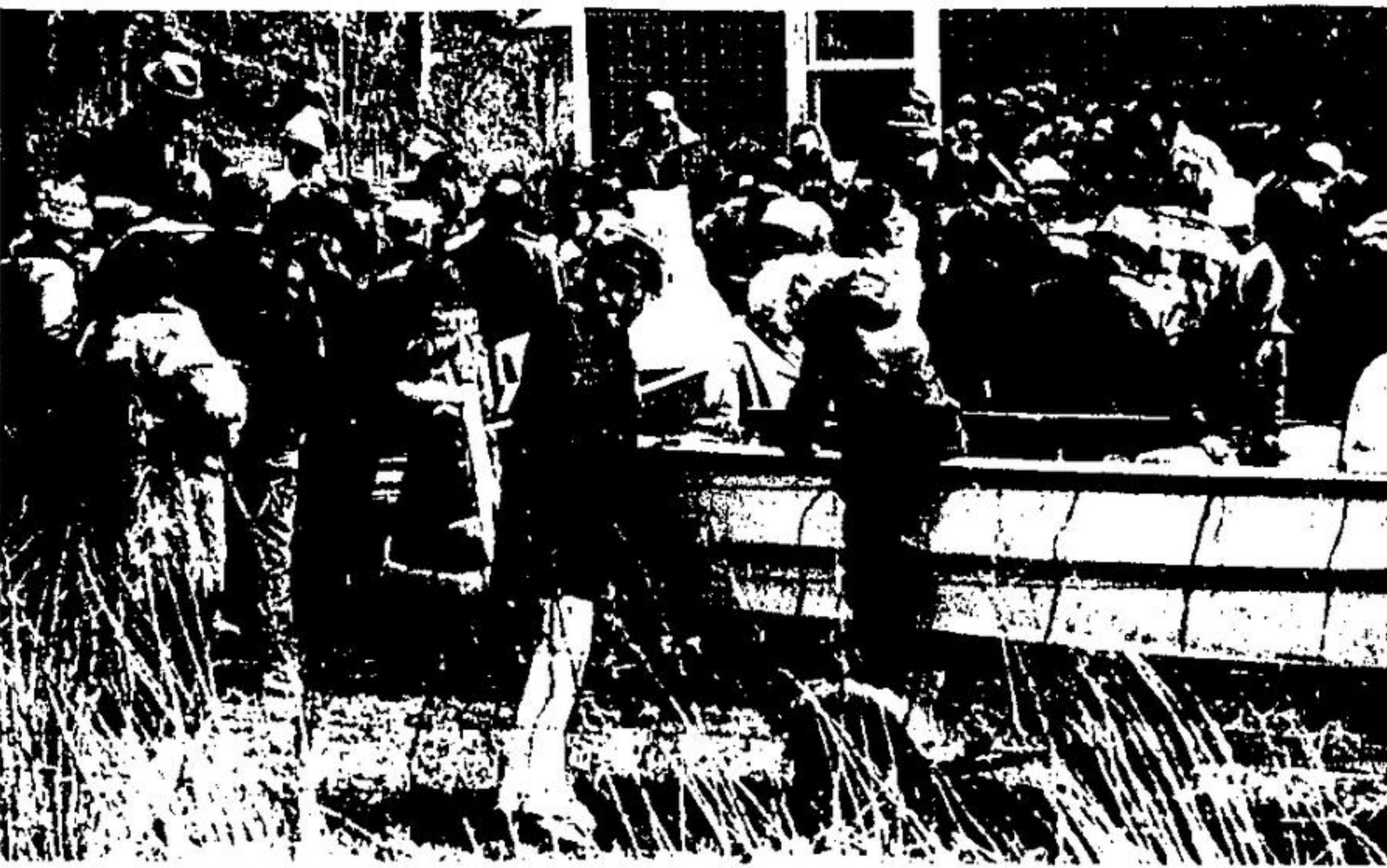
He said "The Board needs to give direct leadership to this issue. There is a need for the Board to take a position which will state clearly to the community what its position is. The more we delay this Board action the greater increase there will be in time-consuming and ineffective use of staff and ever-declining morale by the teachers and principals."

"If the Board delays action on this matter all forms of pressure may soon be exerted by individuals forcing teachers to use materials which lack substance and relevance to the young. This is the worst form of censorship. It can only lead to divisiveness and inconsistency in the Board's behavior," Mr. Boich warned.

Now a new directive announces that no wildflower are to be moved from one location to another due to an outbreak of disease elsewhere. This is to prevent the disease from spreading.

Back again The birds will now likely be put back on Fairy Lake after the ice is completely broken up. Then they'll be free to find their own feed and homesite for summer.

Arena director Harold Townsley, who is in charge of the wildflower, says he will seek firm direction from council about procedures for next year. The large flock of birds which settled here could be prevented by not feeding them, he says. Swans and certain geese could be penned for the winter. In this way, the wildflower sanctuary could be more successful, he feels.



## Mayor angered at mail

Halton Hills mayor Tom Hill, on behalf of the Acton Hydro Electric Commission, is sending letters to the Postmaster General of Canada and Halton M.P. Frank Philbrook complaining about the mail service.

A complaint of the mail service was given by almost every member of the Acton Hydro commission during Thursday evening's meeting.

## New chapter

There's another chapter to the continuing saga of the Fairy Lake ducks.

There are about 60 of them wintering in a barn, supposedly waiting for approval of the Department of Natural Resources before they are moved.

Now a new directive announces that no wildflower are to be moved from one location to another due to an outbreak of disease elsewhere. This is to prevent the disease from spreading.

to all the members was mailed from Toronto, eight weeks and ten days before it was received by some of the commission Chairman Will McEachern received the letter one week before the rest of the members. The event had been over long before the letter received.

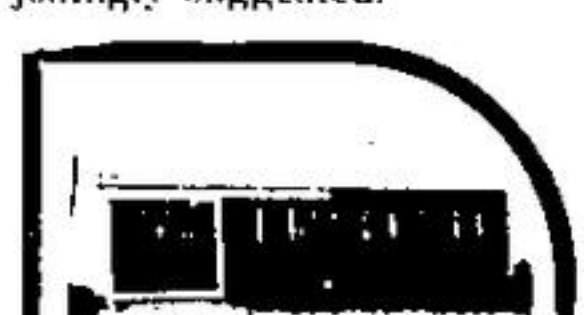
Could have walked Personal mail received by the mayor has also been up to eight weeks in reaching its destination from places "close enough I could have walked it in the time it took the letter to arrive," the mayor complained.

Mr. Hill pointed out that some town business, which dealt with a large sum of money, was waiting on payments getting through in the mail. When the mail does not arrive on time the town has to borrow the money from banks until the money arrives.

Lea Doby, a member of the committee, felt the blame should be laid on "some of these muckheads at the upper level."

Mayor Hill plans to have his secretary mail out a letter to the appropriate authorities, but it was pointed out by

chairman Will McEachern, the letter might never reach them because of the poor service. A messenger was jokingly suggested.



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## "Law ridiculous" regarding Mopeds

Corporal Bob Arbour of the Acton detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police is concerned about the passing of Bill 177 regarding motorized bicycles called mopeds.

In a letter sent to the finance and Personnel committee of Halton Hills Corp. Arbour explained these vehicles can be driven anywhere an ordinary bicycle can go, need no insurance, no helmet, no license, can be driven by anyone over 14, and can reach speeds up to 22 miles per hour. He would like to see tighter controls placed upon them.

At Monday's committee meeting Councillor Harry Levy told the other members he saw one weaving in and out of traffic in Brampton at a busy intersection at five

o'clock that day, with the driver unprotected.

Mr. Levy feels the newly passed provincial laws regarding mopeds "are ridiculous laws".

There was some concern expressed by the committee about the potential speed of the vehicles. Councillor Russ Miller pointed out that a ten speed bicycle is capable of doing 50 miles an hour or more with the same laws as a moped. Pat McKenzie, councillor for wards one and two, pointed out that at 50 mph, the rider would not be keeping that pace constantly as with the motorized bicycle.

Mrs. Miller would like to see the same by-laws applied as to snowmobiles but the matter is being placed under further discussion.



**LILLIPUTIANS** dance with glee as they are saved by Gulliver from the Blufuscans at this week's production of Gulliver as portrayed by a 200 student cast of the Limehouse public school.

## Break-in at garage

Break-in and entry at Toth Motors was reported to Acton O.P.P. April 11 at 7:55 a.m. Entry was gained by a window.

It was believed that \$37 in cash and three boxes of chocolate bars were taken. The break-in is still under investigation.

## Poor turnout for new classes

This is the first year night school classes have been offered starting in April, and according to organizer Boris Shean it may be the last. Registration figures were dismal for the new classes.

There were just three people each who signed up for spring gardening and personal income tax, so these two classes are cancelled.

Motors due The other new class, small motors, is due to begin next

Tuesday if enough people show up.

The yoga class is still operating since it has its previous members as well as newcomers.

The metric system class is offered free and it will begin today (Wednesday) no matter how many more come.

Night school has had a very good season all in all, Mr. Shean reports.

## Cover over dump will sod, plant

The old Esqueing dump is being completely covered over. Heavy equipment from Indusmin Quarries smoothed out the site this week, with the job to be done by Wednesday (today). The property will then be grassed and trees planted by Indusmin.

It's been the location of many fire alarms for the Acton brigade over the years.

## Bald?

People lose strange things, but among the strangest must be one of the Lost and Found items offered in the front window of Joque's Smoke Shop. It's an ownerless brown wig, found on the main street.

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